

TRANSFORMING LEADERSHIP

"So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; v not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory" (1 Peter 5:1-4)

As a leader, my personal mission statement is "to glorify God by equipping and mobilizing leaders for national transformation." I have committed to investing my life in working with the Lord as He raises up a body of leaders who are, first of all, radically transformed by God's life-changing Word, and who will, in turn, dedicate their lives to the transformation of our beloved country in keeping with God's purpose and plan for her.

I am personally inspired by the apostle Peter's example in the area of transforming leadership as reflected in 1 Peter 5:1-4. From the passage, we can glean at least five things that he possessed which helped him become an extraordinary leader who touched and transformed others' lives and turned the world upside-down for Christ.

1. The Right Perspective

To do this, we constantly seek to foster a proper perspective of leadership, one that recognizes that all of God's leaders are fellow workers with each other in His vineyard.

In our passage, Peter sees himself as but a fellow-elder, one who serves together with similarly entrusted men of God. Peter's biblical concept of leadership is so unlike the tradition of leadership promoted by those who later claimed to be his successors throughout church history. The people were recognized as the "Prince of the church," and even heralded as the "Vicar of Christ" on earth. How unlike the humble perspective of the apostle! Christ's leaders lead not from titles or positions conferred upon them by men, but from the partnership and relationship they have one with another, in keeping with the Lord's sovereign design of leadership for His body.

"Witness of the sufferings of Christ." Part of this biblical perspective of leadership includes the normal expectation of sharing in the sufferings of our Lord. One cannot be an under-shepherd of Christ if he has no experience of walking the same path that our Chief Shepherd walked. As the saying goes, "You don't really know a man until you've walked in his shoes."

Tradition holds that the apostle Peter considered himself unworthy of dying in the same manner of death by which His Master died. He chose, rather, to be crucified upside down. He was willingly martyred for his faith because of his love for Jesus and his desire to know the full measure of His obedience to the Father's will.

In a similar way, we endeavor to uphold the premium of godly suffering as part of one's leadership journey with Jesus, not for suffering's sake, but for the ultimate fruit

of Christlikeness, which such experiences bear in the lives of those who partake of them. Only then can they testify to the truth of what it means to fully follow Christ.

"Partakers in the glory that is going to be revealed." Happily, like Peter, those who seek to fully follow the Lord will also experience the fullness of the glory of His soon coming. Servant leaders of Christ do not lead for the sake of earthly glory; they understand that it is His kingdom, not theirs, which they are furthering. They know very well that their glory is with Him, Whose fullness is yet to be fully revealed.

"Shepherd the flock of God." Peter also stressed the perspective that the flock under our respective care belongs to God' we are but His under-shepherd. I get bothered when people say this is "my church" or "my congregation," when the reality is that they belong to God and we are only caretakers of the flock which Jesus bought with His own blood. As such, our duty is to ensure the welfare of the flock by caring for them holistically – spirit, soul and body. We give our best efforts to lead and guide them along in their spiritual growth by feeding them with God's nurturing Word and protecting them from spiritual heresy.

2. **The Right Attitude**

"Not under compulsion, but willingly." In our service as leaders, we seek to cultivate among ourselves a sustained attitude of willingness to minister, as opposed to a sense of external compulsion and drudgery in ministry. Leaders who serve under compulsion will do it with either a false sense of unworthiness or with reluctance for the responsibility, or even worse, with a desire to do more than what is required in the office. These attitudes lead to an unwillingness to take on the task or discharge it adequately. Unwilling leaders become hirelings and not shepherds whose focus is more on what they can get rather than what they can give in the position.

"As God would have you." Leader must serve with the pure motivation to do God's will and to serve Him freely and eagerly. The true follower of Christ knows that our Lord is a great Rewarder of all who faithfully hold fast to His call upon their lives.

3. **The Right Motive**

"Not for shameful gain, but eagerly." Sadly, for every faithful servant who truly deserve honor there are shepherds who serve with ill motives, who care only for themselves and devour the flock. The apostle reminds us in our passage that people who serve in this spirit are only storing up for themselves "shameful gain"; treasures that will rot and vanish as quickly as they were greedily acquired. It is a sad fact that there are those who serve God in this manner.

Such self-seeking attitude is not only confined to material gain but could also apply to the love of reputation or position. There is now the proliferation of ecclesiastical titles and conferred academic degrees among our ranks and we need to check ourselves concerning our motivation for seeking such recognition.

Transforming leaders seek not position or power but eagerly serve even without fanfare and accolade in order to give glory to the Chief Shepherd.

4. **The Right Manner**

"Not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock." Those who serve the Lord with impure motives usually manifest their defective spirit by an equally defective demeanor. These false shepherds tend to carry themselves with an arrogant air of superiority, lording it over their flock with a haughty and, often, insecure and intimidating spirit. They drive people and expect results from them, which they usually get, often at the expense of spiritual fruit and character.

Domineering is often the attitude of a worldly superior, but a transforming leader, rather than lording it over those in his charge and getting what he can out of them, is to be an example, giving what he can contribute to them in the way of instruction and character building.

True shepherds of the Lord's flock, lead by the attractive example of a humble, Christlike manner that exudes quiet confidence and spiritual maturity. They inspire obedience by behaving in such a way that believers end up wanting to imitate them, and do so. These leaders create a positive environment around them that fosters healthy growth, genuine spiritual transformation and maturity in the lives of their flock.

5. **The Right Accountability**

"When the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory." Genuine, Spirit-led leaders seek not to please men but Christ, the Chief Shepherd, whose forthcoming appearance they wholeheartedly long for, and to Whom they shall give a full account. They know that on that blessed day, they shall receive the "unfading crown" of God's love and pleasure over their life and devoted service. Such men and women seek rewards that are of eternal value. They will not be bought or enticed by worldly fame or gain; they are those who keep their gaze steadily upon the Master's face and the "glorious prize."

This is the spirit and quality of transformed leadership that we continue to endeavor to foster, equip and uphold. By God's grace and faithfulness, this is what we shall keep on doing until His glorious return.

Transforming leaders bless others with the blessings with which the Lord has bestowed on them. They are not selfish but self giving, seeking to honor the Lord by working with and serving others; not seeking position or power but seeking to equip and empower others in their service to the Lord. May we be transformed to be that kind of a leader!

CONCLUSION:

We celebrate multiple transformational streams, which are becoming one great "transformational river" broadening and deepening the healing of the nations. The river is here.

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